United Nations S/2006/324

Security Council

Distr.: General
25 May 2006

Original: English

Letter dated 23 May 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Please find attached the report on the work of the Security Council during the Argentine presidency, in March 2006 (see annex). This report was written under my supervision, after consultations with the other members of the Security Council.

I should be grateful if you would circulate this letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) César **Mayoral**
Ambassador

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Annex to the letter dated 23 May 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Argentina (March 2006)

Introduction

Under the presidency of Argentina in March 2006, the Security Council undertook a very heavy programme of work, addressing a wide range of issues on its agenda including the extension of the mandates of five peacekeeping operations (UNMEE, UNAMA, UNMIS, UNMIL and UNOMIG), the consideration of 14 reports of the Secretary-General, the adoption of seven resolutions and five presidential statements. The President also made three statements to the press on behalf of members of the Security Council.

During the month of March, the Security Council held 21 official meetings and 21 informal consultations.

There were three open debates on Afghanistan, Haiti and small arms; three public meetings on the Middle East, Lebanon and Côte d'Ivoire, and three open briefings on Iraq, Liberia and the Sudan.

Through its website, the presidency provided regular updates on the programme of work as well as on the activities of the Security Council.

Africa

Burundi

On 23 March, during informal consultations, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Burundi, Carolyn McAskie, briefed the Council on the situation in Burundi and presented the sixth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Burundi (S/2006/163) highlighting the need for long-lasting solution to the problem of the Forces nationales de libération (FNL). The Special Representative considered that the offer of the leader of FNL, Agathon Rwasa, to hold negotiations without preconditions with a view to putting a final end to violence should be seriously considered by the Government of Burundi. She informed the Council about the progress made by the Government in its efforts to fight poverty and stressed the fact that the Government had recently acknowledged that the international community could not only assist Burundi in development issues but also provide sound advice in political matters. After informal consultations, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2006/12), in which it expressed its concern for the human rights abuses committed by the Burundian army and FNL.

Côte d'Ivoire

The Director of the Africa Division of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations briefed the Council at informal consultations on 8 March about recent developments in Côte d'Ivoire. He stated that, while the political situation had

improved after the meeting of the Ivorian leaders in Yamoussoukro on 28 February 2006, there was still a need for further reinforcements for the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), as recommended by the Secretary-General in his seventh progress report on UNOCI, taking into account the volatile situation in the west of Côte d'Ivoire.

On 29 March, before informal consultations, a similar request for reinforcement was made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Côte d'Ivoire, Youssouf Bakayoko, who made a statement during a public meeting of the Council. The same day, after consultations, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2006/14), in which, while welcoming the recent progress achieved in Côte d'Ivoire such as the meeting of the entire Cabinet, the establishment of the Independent Electoral Commission, the organization of examinations in the north, and the preparation of operations of identification of the population and of disarmament, it also urged the parties to rapidly implement the road map so as to organize free, fair, open and transparent elections by 31 October 2006.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 24 March, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, briefed the Council on the visit he and the Secretary-General had made to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He considered most important for the legitimacy of the future elected Government and for the post-electoral stability to have an inclusive electoral process where all parties (including the Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social) were represented, while at the same time respecting the road map for the holding of elections at the end of June. As for the situation in the east, concerns were raised on human rights abuses by local militias as well as by brigades of the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which had resulted in 150,000 internally displaced persons. Since only one brigade of the armed forces, trained by Belgium, had been fully integrated and was fully professional, reinforcement for MONUC, especially during the electoral process, was still necessary. With regard to a future downsizing of MONUC forces in the post-election period, the Under-Secretary-General stressed the importance of establishing certain benchmarks to be achieved by the elected Government, such as the selection of military and police personnel according to their professional capacities, to assure successful security sector reform. He also stated the importance of further cooperation of the international community with the Government to achieve a more transparent exploitation of natural resources, which accounts for 80 per cent of the income of the Government. Finally, he considered that, without peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the rest of Africa would remain unstable.

Eritrea and Ethiopia

On 3 March, the President delivered a statement to the press in which members of the Council expressed their deep sadness at the death of a member of the Indian contingent of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) and extended their profound condolences to the family of the deceased and the Government of India. The Council also expressed great concern that the death had occurred in the circumstances of the unacceptable restrictions imposed by the Government of Eritrea on the operations of UNMEE, which had grave implications for the safety of its staff and which must be lifted without further delay, as demanded in resolution 1640 (2005), among others. The members reiterated their

profound appreciation for the perseverance, contribution and dedication of the troop-contributing countries to the work of UNMEE.

On 13 March, after a private meeting held with troop-contributing countries to UNMEE, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Ethiopia and Eritrea, Legwaila Joseph Legwaila, briefed the Council on developments on the ground and the meeting of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission with the parties, held in London on 10 March. He informed the Council that the meeting in London was a step forward and that the parties had agreed on arrangements for resuming the process of demarcation. He also stated that, for the border to be demarcated, the unilateral restrictions imposed on UNMEE should be lifted and urged the international community to remain seized of the matter.

On 14 March, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1661 (2006), by which it decided to extend the mandate of UNMEE for a period of one month, until 15 April 2006, and demanded that the parties fully comply with resolution 1640 (2005), in particular paragraphs 1 and 5.

Guinea-Bissau

On 23 March, the Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau, João Bernardo Honwana, presented the report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in that country (UNOGBIS) (S/2006/162) and informed the Council that, despite some encouraging developments, the situation in Guinea-Bissau remained fragile, as party and personality disputes continued to undermine the authority of State institutions. He confirmed that the economic situation of the country was extremely precarious. He also referred to clashes on the Senegalese border between troops of Guinea-Bissau and rebels from the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance, which had caused the movement of some 5,500 civilians. Member States recognized the important role played by UNOGBIS, in particular in the efforts towards security sector reform. They agreed that UNOGBIS should continue monitoring the situation in Guinea-Bissau closely. They urged Guinea-Bissau's politicians to put an end to their disputes and, in so doing, to undertake jointly efforts towards a consolidated peace in the country.

Liberia

On 17 March, the President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, addressed the Security Council at a public meeting. She expressed gratitude to the United Nations and the families of all the peacekeepers of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). She stressed that her inauguration on 16 January 2006 as democratically elected President had opened up many possibilities and also formidable challenges that lay ahead.

On 24 March, after a private meeting held with troop-contributing countries to UNMIL, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Liberia, Alan Doss, briefed the Council on developments on the ground and presented the tenth progress report of the Secretary-General on UNMIL (S/2006/159), in which was provided an update on major developments in the country and recommendations on a drawdown plan for UNMIL, including specific benchmarks and a tentative schedule, as requested by the Council in resolution 1626 (2005).

On 31 March, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1667 (2006), by which it extended the mandate of UNMIL until 30 September 2006; reaffirmed its intention to authorize the Secretary-General to redeploy troops between UNMIL and UNOCI on a temporary basis in accordance with the provisions of resolution 1609 (2005), as might be needed; took note of the letter from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council dated 22 March 2006 (S/2006/184); expressed its determination to review the tasks and the troop level of UNOCI by the end of April 2006, with a view to a decision on its reinforcement; and requested the Secretary-General to review his recommendations for a drawdown plan for UNMIL and to present further recommendations in his next regular report to the Council on the progress of UNMIL with the implementation of its mandate.

Somalia

On 10 March, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia and Head of UNPOS, François Lonseny Fall, briefed the Security Council on the situation on the ground and presented the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia (S/2006/122), which provided an update on the security situation and on the humanitarian and development activities of United Nations programmes and agencies in Somalia, with special emphasis on the serious humanitarian situation created by the drought in the southern and central regions of the country. He also focused on the Aden Declaration signed on 5 January 2006 by the President of the Transitional Federal Government, Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed and the Speaker of the Transitional Federal Parliament, Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden.

At the same meeting, the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia, Ambassador Nassir Abdulaziz al-Nasser, reported to the Council about the mid-term briefing, on 14 February 2006, of the Monitoring Group established pursuant to resolution 1630 (2005).

On 15 March, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2006/11), in which it commended the efforts of the President and the Speaker towards reconciliation and dialogue, supported the convening of the first session of the Transitional Federal Parliament, commended the efforts of the international community in support of the peace process in Somalia, and made clear its position on other issues such as the IGAD peace support mission to Somalia, piracy and the arms embargo.

Sudan

On 13 March, the Council was briefed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hédi Annabi, on the status of the contingency planning for the transition from the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS) to a United Nations operation. He informed the Council that the main objective of the planning was the protection of civilians at risk and that it was made under two key assumptions: cooperation from the Government of National Unity and joint planning with the African Union.

On 21 March, after a private meeting held with troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS), the Council had an open meeting at which it considered the situation in the Sudan. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan, Jan Pronk, presented the

monthly report of the Secretary-General on Darfur (S/2006/148) and the report of the Secretary-General on the Sudan (S/2006/160). He made a number of remarks on the basis of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement mandate and addressed the situation in Darfur.

On 24 March, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1663 (2006), by which it extended the mandate of UNMIS until 24 September 2006 and asked the Secretary-General, jointly with the African Union, in close and continuing consultation with the Security Council, and in cooperation and close consultation with the parties to the Abuja peace talks, including the Government of National Unity, to expedite the necessary preparatory planning for transition from AMIS to a United Nations operation, including options for how UNMIS could reinforce the effort for peace in Darfur through additional appropriate transitional assistance to AMIS, including assistance in logistics, mobility and communications; and that the Secretary-General present to the Council by 24 April 2006 for its consideration a range of options for a United Nations operation in Darfur.

On 29 March, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1665 (2006), extending until 29 September 2006 the mandate of the Panel of Experts originally appointed pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005) and extended by resolution 1651 (2005).

Americas

Haiti

On 27 March, the Council held an open debate on the question of Haiti. The meeting was chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of Argentina, Jorge Taiana. The President-Elect of Haiti, René Préval, was also present and he delivered a speech in which he stressed his priorities. The Secretary-General opened the debate and his Special Representative, Juan Gabriel Valdés, gave an overview on the situation. The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Greece, Guyana (on behalf of the Rio Group), the Bahamas (on behalf of CARICOM), the Dominican Republic and Guatemala, and the Deputy Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Peru and Chile, as well as a high-level envoy from Brazil made statements.

In total, 29 representatives of Member States, as well as Mr. Préval, the Secretary-General, his Special Representative, the President of the Economic and Social Council and representatives of the Organization of American States and the United Nations Development Programme addressed the Council. At the end of the meeting, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2006/13), congratulating Mr. Préval on his election, and emphasizing the importance of completing the electoral process in a transparent and credible manner. The Council reaffirmed that the establishment of the rule of law, including the protection of human rights, institutional capacity-building and progress on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration would be crucial over the next few years, and called for advancing the reform of the Haitian police and the judiciary system. Finally, the Council recognized that sustainable development remained essential to the stability of the country and reiterated its willingness to cooperate with the newly elected authorities in order to address the challenges ahead.

Asia

Afghanistan

On 14 March the Security Council held an open debate on the situation in Afghanistan. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Tom Koenigs, introduced the latest report of the Secretary-General on this issue (S/2006/145) and updated the Council on the activities of the United Nations and the developments in Afghanistan since the last briefing, held on 10 February. During the debate statements were made by the 15 members of the Council and the representatives of Afghanistan, Australia, Austria, Iceland, Germany, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Norway, New Zealand, Italy, the Republic of Korea, Canada and Pakistan.

Subsequently, the members of the Council negotiated a draft resolution on the basis of the recommendations of the Secretary-General, which was adopted on 23 March as resolution 1662 (2006). The Council decided, inter alia, to extend the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) as laid out in the latest report of the Secretary-General, for an additional period of 12 months from the date of adoption of the resolution.

Iraq

In informal consultations held on 6 March, the Council members heard a briefing from the Acting Executive Chairman of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, Demetrius Perricos, on the activities of UNMOVIC during the past quarter.

At an open meeting on 15 March, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Ashraf Qazi, introduced the latest report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 30 of resolution 1546 (2004) (S/2006/137) and updated the Council on the activities of UNAMI and on the main developments in Iraq since December 2005.

The Permanent Representative of the United States of America provided the quarterly update on the activities of the Multinational Force. The Chargé d'affaires of Iraq participated in the meeting and briefed the Council on developments in his country in the previous three months and on challenges ahead. The Council pursued this in informal consultations following the open briefing.

The situation in the Middle East

Lebanon

On 16 March, Serge Brammertz, Commissioner of the International Independent Investigation Commission investigating the assassination of the former Lebanese Prime Minister, Rafik Hariri, presented the third report of the Commission (S/2006/161, annex) at a public meeting of the Council. The Acting Secretary-General of the Lebanese Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Emigrants, Ambassador Boutros Assaker, and the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Syrian Arab Republic, Ambassador Fayssal Mekdad, also addressed the Council.

The Council members continued their discussions in informal consultations, attended by the Commissioner. At the end of the consultations, the President of the Council delivered a statement to the press, welcoming the report of the Commission and commending the Commissioner and his team for their work. The members of the Council noted with satisfaction that the investigations had advanced and welcomed the steps taken by the Commission to extend technical assistance to the Lebanese judicial and law enforcement agencies with regard to their investigations into other terrorist attacks. The members of the Council took note of the common understanding on legal and operational matters of the Commission and the Syrian authorities regarding the cooperation of the Syrian Arab Republic with the investigation.

In informal consultations on 23 March the Council heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, the Legal Counsel, Nicolas Michel, on the consultations held with the Government of Lebanon to explore the requirements for a tribunal of an international character to try those eventually charged with involvement in the terrorist attack that killed former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and 22 others. The Legal Counsel referred to the main elements of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2006/176) and members of the Council exchanged views in this regard.

On 29 March, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1664 (2005) in which it requested the Secretary-General to negotiate with the Government of Lebanon an agreement aimed at establishing a tribunal of an international character based on the highest international standards of criminal justice, taking into account the recommendations in his report and the views expressed by Council members.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

In informal consultations held on 14 March the Council considered the situation in the Middle East. The purpose of the meeting was to consider recent developments in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, in particular the Gaza Strip. Members of the Council subsequently negotiated a draft presidential statement presented by the delegation of Qatar, which was not adopted.

On 30 March the Council held a public meeting on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. The Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Tuliameni Kalomoh, briefed the Council and referred to the main developments that had occurred in the Middle East since the last briefing, at the end of February.

In the ensuing debate, the 15 Council members made statements. The representatives of the Observer Mission of Palestine, Israel, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates, Austria, Yemen and Malaysia also participated and made statements. The Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People took the floor under rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure.

Europe

Abkhazia, Georgia

On 28 March, after a private meeting held with troop-contributing countries to UNOMIG, the Acting Director for Europe of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations briefed the Council on the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, and presented the report of the Secretary-General (S/2006/173) on that issue. He stressed the fact that the military situation was calm but unstable since the core political issues of the conflict had not yet been addressed. He highlighted the understandings reached at the Geneva meeting of the Group of Friends and considered most important for the peace process the early finalization of the documents on the non-use of force and the return of internally displaced persons and refugees. On 31 March, the Council adopted by unanimity resolution 1666 (2006) extending the mandate of UNOMIG for a period of six months, until 15 October 2006.

Kosovo (Serbia and Montenegro)

On 7 March, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the future status process for Kosovo, Martii Ahtisaari, briefed the Council on the first round of direct talks between the delegations of Kosovo and Serbia on the future status of Kosovo, held in Vienna on 20 and 21 February. He explained that he was using a "bottom-up approach", starting the process by dealing with practical and status-neutral issues. He informed the Council that conversations were focused on decentralization and also addressed issues of cultural and religious heritage, minority rights and the economy, among others. The second round of negotiations was scheduled for 17 March 2006.

Other issues

International Women's Day

On 8 March, on the occasion of International Women's Day, the President of the Security Council delivered a statement to the press, in which the members of the Council reaffirmed their commitment to the continuing and full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Furthermore, the Security Council strongly condemned all acts of sexual abuse and exploitation committed by United Nations personnel and supported the policy of zero tolerance launched by the Secretary-General.

Small arms

On 20 March, the Security Council held an open debate on the report of the Secretary-General on small arms (S/2006/109) dated 17 February. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Peru, Oscar Maúrtua, was present. In addition to the members of the Council, representatives of the following countries made statements: Austria (on behalf of the European Union), Guyana (on behalf of the Rio Group), Australia, Sierra Leone, Ukraine, Egypt, South Africa, Papua New Guinea (on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum), Brazil, Uruguay, Colombia, Guatemala, Republic of Korea, Senegal, Canada, Indonesia, Cambodia, Fiji, Nigeria, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Norway.

In introducing the report, the representative of the Department for Disarmament Affairs stressed that supporting States in building the necessary capacity to improve the effectiveness of the Council's arms embargoes was among the areas requiring further efforts. Such support could include technical assistance for improved monitoring of national air spaces and maritime borders, as well as the development of means to identify and prosecute those that violated arms embargoes. Efforts also needed to be intensified to systematically integrate long-term small arms and light weapons control measures in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process in post-conflict situations.

In the debate that followed, Council members and representatives of Member States stressed that the widespread availability of small arms and light weapons in many regions of the world was a major source of insecurity and poverty. Nowhere was that more evident than across large parts of Africa. By fuelling conflict, crime and terrorism, the illicit proliferation undermined peace and greatly hindered development. They also made references to the need to bring national legislations into line with the Security Council arms embargoes and suggested ways and means to enforce them.

Many Council members and representatives of Member States agreed that it was time for the Security Council to adopt a resolution on this issue. Consequently consultations in that regard will continue.

Non-proliferation

On 29 March, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2006/15), in which it noted with serious concern the decision of the Islamic Republic of Iran to resume enrichment-related activities and to suspend cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) under the additional protocol, and underlined the importance of re-establishing full and sustained suspension of all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, including research and development, to be verified by IAEA. The Council also expressed the conviction that such suspension and full, verified compliance with the requirements set out by the IAEA Board of Governors would contribute to a diplomatic, negotiated solution that would guarantee that the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran was for exclusively peaceful purposes. The Council underlined the international community's willingness to work positively for such a solution, which would also benefit nuclear non-proliferation elsewhere.

Furthermore, the Council noted with serious concern that the report of 27 February of the Director General of IAEA (GOV/2006/15) listed a number of outstanding issues, including topics which could have a military nuclear dimension, and that the Agency was unable to conclude that there were no undeclared nuclear materials or activities in the Islamic Republic of Iran. It called upon the Islamic Republic of Iran to take the steps required by the IAEA Board of Governors to build confidence in the exclusively peaceful purpose of its nuclear programme and to resolve outstanding questions. The Council requested that the Director General of IAEA submit to the IAEA Board of Governors and in parallel to the Council, within 30 days, a report on Iranian compliance with the steps required by the Board.

International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia

On 31 March the Council held an informal meeting on the issue of the death of the former President of the Former Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic. The Council had a videoconference with the President of the Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, Judge Fausto Pocar, and the Deputy Registrar of the Tribunal, John Hocking. The two officials informed the Council about the death of Mr. Milosevic in the prison of the Tribunal and provided information concerning medical rules and facilities at the Tribunal as well as the state of the official inquiry. The members of the Council asked questions of both officials and agreed that the Council should be kept informed about the development of the inquiry into Mr. Milosevic's death.

Appendix

Resolutions

1661 (2006)	The situation between Eritrea and Ethiopia
1662 (2006)	The situation in Afghanistan
1663 (2006)	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan
1664 (2006)	The situation in the Middle East
1665 (2006)	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan
1666 (2006)	The situation in Georgia
1667 (2006)	The situation in Liberia

Presidential statements

S/PRST/2006/11	The situation in Somalia
S/PRST/2006/12	The situation in Burundi
S/PRST/2006/13	The question concerning Haiti
S/PRST/2006/14	The situation in Côte d'Ivoire
S/PRST/2006/15	Non-proliferation

Statements to the press

3 March	Ethiopia and Eritrea
8 March	International Women's Day
16 March	Investigation into the assassination of Rafik Hariri